

Memo, with Attachment
Richard S. Rauschkolb, AFHRA/CC,
for AF/HO, SAF/AAZ
Subj: GAO Review on Records
Management Procedures Dealing
with Weather Balloons, Unknown
Aircraft, and Similar Crash
Incidents . . .
March 8, 1994



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
AIR FORCE HISTORICAL RESEARCH AGENCY
MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA



8 Mar 94

PLS
MEMORANDUM FOR AF/HO
SAF/AAZ *Weaver con*
IN TURN *10/2/94*

FROM: AFHRA/CC
600 Chennault Circle
Maxwell AFB AL 36112-6424

SUBJECT: GAO Review on Records Management Procedures Dealing with
Weather Balloons, Unknown Aircraft, and Similar Crash Incidents

Reference: SAF/AAZ Ltr, 1 Mar 94

Attached are the results of the records search conducted at the Agency pursuant to the instructions of referenced letter. Point of contact at this Agency is Dr James Kitchens, DSN 493-5068 or commercial (205) 953-5068.

Richard S. Rauschkolb
RICHARD S. RAUSCHKOLB
Colonel, USAF
Commander

Attachment:
AFHRA's Report

REPORT

GAO INVESTIGATION OF "THE ROSWELL INCIDENT": RELEVANT HOLDINGS AT THE AFHRA

8 March 1994

Preface

On 1 March 1994 a facsimile transmission from the Secretary of the Air Force, Office of Administrative Assistant (SAF/AA) directed the Historical Research Agency to support the General Accounting Office's investigation of "the Roswell incident." Specifically, the Agency was directed to identify any records in its possession concerning the investigation and reporting of air vehicle and other crash incidents similar to the reported crash of a weather balloon near Roswell, New Mexico, in July 1947 ("the Roswell incident"). This report presents the search procedure and results and indicates some possible additional locations for Air Force files on the Roswell incident.

Definition of a Search Strategy

The AFHRA/RSQ (Inquiries Branch) was assigned the task of responding to the SAF/AAZ directive. On 2 March 1994, Inquiries Branch staff developed a list of possible file locations which might contain relevant documents. Primary items on this list were Roswell AAFld installation histories, together with unit histories of the Air Force organizations stationed at Roswell in June-July 1947. In addition, the following rubrics were identified for insertion into the Agency's finding aids:

- Roswell
- Roswell Army Air Field
- Unidentified Flying Objects
- UFO(s)
- Weather Balloon(s)

Results of the Search - Unit Histories

In June/July 1947, the principal Air Force unit stationed at Roswell was the 509th Bomb Group (H). This group, its constituent squadrons, and support organizations were therefore indicated as the most likely locations for any reporting about the Roswell incident in Agency files. On 3 March 1994, the unit histories of Air Force organizations stationed at Roswell AAFld were retrieved and examined page-by-page for any entries

related to unidentified flying objects and/or the crash of a weather balloon near the base in the June/July 1947 time frame. The results of this search were as follows:

- 509th Bomb Group (H) - June/July 1947 - One brief passage mentioning the Office of Public Affairs and "flying disc" activities in GP-509-HI, July 1947, p. 39 (see Appendix I).
- 393rd Bomb Sqdn - No AFHRA files for June/July 1947.
- 715th Bomb Sqdn - No AFHRA files for June/July 1947.
- 830th Bomb Sqdn - Nothing in unit history for 24 May 1946-23 June 1947 (SQ-BOMB-830-HI, 24 May 1946-23 June 1947).
- 1027th Air Materiel Sqdn - Nothing in unit history for 17 Dec 1944-Nov 1947 (SQ-SV-1027-HI, 17 Dec 1944-Nov 1947).
- 427th AAF Base Unit - This unit's historical reports are included in Roswell AAFld installation histories (AFHRA series 288.17-28, 1947). No mention of Roswell incident found.
- 390th Air Service Sqdn - No AFHRA files for June/July 1947.
- 1395th Military Police Company (Aviation) - No AFHRA files for June/July 1947.
- 603rd Air Engineering Sqdn - Nothing in unit history for Feb-Nov 1947 (SQ-ENGR-603-HI, Feb-Nov 1947).

It should be noted that the period from approximately 1946 to 1950 is the least well documented era in the Air Force's unit history program. During this time of drastically reduced forces and peacetime concerns, major unit histories were frequently thin and their content sketchy at best. Small units, especially support units, frequently did not submit histories at all during the 1946-1947 period. Although we cannot be absolutely sure that the histories marked "no holding" in the above list were never written, it appears virtually certain that they were not, in fact, ever created. If written, there is good evidence through accessioning and microfilming records that the Agency never received those indicated as absent from the AFHRA collection.

Result of the Search - Base Histories

On 3 March 1994 the Agency's files of Roswell AAFld histories for June/July 1947 were examined. These base or installation histories are designated AFHRA 288.17-28, Roswell AAFld Histories, Jan 1946-Dec 1947 (3 vols). These histories amount to approximately two linear inches and are largely concerned with administrative matters (number of

personnel, transfers, routine administrative actions, etc.). No mention of the Roswell incident was found in them.

Result of the Search - Card Catalog and IRIS

On 3 March 1994 appropriate rubrics in the Agency's card catalog such as "Roswell," "Roswell AAFld," "UFO(s)," "Unidentified Flying Objects," "Weather Balloon(s)," were examined. No entries were found which identified information remotely related to the Roswell incident.

The Agency's IRIS electronic data base was also queried for potential entries. The following key words or phases were entered:

ROSWELL
UFO
UFOS
UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECT
UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS
WEATHER BALLOON
WEATHER BALLOONS

The IRIS search produced no documents concerned with a flying disc and/or weather balloon crash at Roswell AAFld. The IRIS search, however, did reveal a substantial file in AFHRA microfilm roll 33,764, beginning frame 562, which is concerned with flying disk reports in the western United States during the summer and fall of 1947. This file was apparently maintained by the Air Force Missile Development Command. It reveals contemporary investigative agencies, methods, and personalities both Air Force and civilian, thus it provides archival clues for further investigation of the Roswell incident. Extracts from microfilm roll 33,764 are attached as Appendix II.

Finally, a passage mentioning balloon operations from Holloman AFB during June-July 1947 was located in AFHRA K280.10-54G, 1947-1958, *Contributions of Balloon Operations to Research and Development at the Air Force Missile Development Center, Holloman Air Force Base, N. Mex., 1947-1950* (Holloman AFB, NM: AFMDC, n.d.), pp. 1-2 (Appendix III). This passage indicates that a cluster of "rubber-type weather balloons" was launched at Holloman AFB on 5 June 1947, the equipment from which was recovered. A second launch of polyethylene balloons was made on 3 July, the equipment for which was not recovered.

Aircraft or "Vehicle" Crash Reports

The AFHRA does not hold aircraft accident reports. The office of record for such reports is the Air Force Safety Agency/SERR, Kirtland AFB, NM.

Summary and Conclusions

The Historical Research Agency is primarily a repository for unit histories and supporting documents, and it has never routinely received the kind of records which might provide details of the Roswell incident. If such records survive today, they will undoubtedly be held by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), either at the Washington National Records Center (WNRC) or the Southwest Regional Depository (Fort Worth, Texas).

Recommendations

Because the records management policy of the federal government requires that obsolete office files be retired to the NARA, the WNRC and the NARA Southwest Regional Depository might be searched for files related to the Roswell incident.

AFHRA microfilm roll 33,764 indicates that the Fourth Air Force and its A-2 intelligence section apparently carried out investigations of flying disks in the western US in 1947. Research in the NARA, therefore, might reasonably include a search for surviving HQ Fourth AF and Fourth AF A-2 Section files in the NARA.

James H. Kitchens, III

JAMES H. KITCHENS, III, PhD
Archivist
Inquiries Branch

Richard S. Rauschkolb

RICHARD S. RAUSCHKOLB
Colonel, USAF
Commander

Appendix

1. 509 BG History, Jun/Jul 47
2. Extract from "Flying Disks 1947" w/o
3. Ballon Operations at AFMDC, 1947-1950, pp 1-2 w/o

COMBINED HISTORY
509TH BOMB GROUP
AND
ROSWELL ARMY AIRFIELD
1 JULY 1947 THROUGH 31 JULY 1947



DECLASSIFIED
APR 29 1955

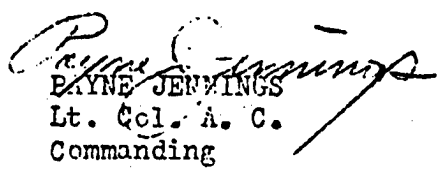
See Chap. #3 (Organization)

HEADQUARTERS
509TH BOMB GP (WH)
ROSWELL ARMY AIR FIELD
ROSWELL, NEW MEXICO

GENERAL ORDERS)
NUMBER 9)

8 July 1947

1. Pursuant to authority contained in Hqs. 8th Air Force TEX number 41 1593 dated 6 July 1947, the undersigned hereby assumes command of the Roswell Army Air Field, Roswell, New Mexico. Effective this date.


PAYNE JENNINGS
Lt. Col. A. C.
Commanding

DISTRIBUTION:

| | |
|----------------|-------|
| "A" & Post | (325) |
| Personnel | (6) |
| Classification | (5) |
| Hqs. 8th AF | (5) |
| Hqs. SAC | (2) |
| Col. Jennings | (1) |

[REDACTED]

CHAPTER III

ORGANIZATION

Any significant changes in organization as activation or deactivation of units, or change of command, will be dealt with in this chapter.

Lt Colonel Payne Jennings, Deputy Commander, assumed command of Roswell Army Air Field on 8 July 1947. Colonel W. H. Blanchard, Commanding Officer went on leave. ^{1/}

Lt Colonel Charles W. Horton, Jr., was assigned as Commanding Officer of Squadron "A", vice Lt Colonel Richard P. Schumacher on 14 July 1947. The Squadron Adjutant, Captain Bowman, was transferred overseas and was replaced by Captain Joseph A. Jones.

Command of the 3rd Photo Laboratory Unit (VH), was assumed by 1st Lt Harold W. Arner per Paragraph 3, Special Order, #139, Headquarters, Roswell Army Air Field, dated 18 July 1947. He relieved 1st Lt Lewis C. Bohanan who was transferred to the 701st AAF BU, Hamilton Field, California.

The 390th Air Service Squadron received a new commanding officer in the person of Lt Colonel Walter Y. Lucas, who assumed command on 1 July 1947. Colonel Lucas relieved Lt Colonel William C. Kingsbury who then assumed command of the 715th Bomb Squadron (VH), formerly commanded by Colonel Lucas.

1st Lt W. G. Hilburn, former Assistant Base Adjutant, transferred from Squadron "A", 427th AAF BU to 603rd Air Engineering Squadron as Squadron Adjutant. He replaces Captain Earl O. Casey, who is on orders for an overseas assignment to Project PAC

1/ G.O. #9, paragraph 1 - RAAF, Roswell, New Mexico

[REDACTED]

The other three briefings were those which were given to the VIP and a simulated briefing to a large group of Air Scouts representing all of the troops in New Mexico which was given on 15 July 1947.

Several small projects were completed during the month including signs on all the office doors, a building directory, and a world situation map which is maintained on a day-to-day basis.

The Historical Section of S-2 has been seriously handicapped by the removal of the regular stenographer with the reduction in force.

Due to the fact that the quality of the department reports has in general been so inadequate, lectures are being prepared to be given early in August to properly train the liaison representatives of each department.

The Office of Public Information was kept quite busy during the month answering inquiries on the "flying disc", which was reported to be in possession of the 509th Bomb Group. The object turned out to be a radar tracking balloon.

The main project of the month was making all arrangements for a successful Air Force Day. Lt. Colonel Oliver LaFarge, Air Reserve Corps, at Santa Fe, made arrangements for Colonel Blanchard to visit the Governor of New Mexico and ask him to declare Air Force Day in New Mexico on 1 August.

[REDACTED]

The Public Information Office was host during the month to the Senior Air Scouts of New Mexico, and to the several groups of visiting VIP's. Several easy chairs and couches have been procured to make the Public Information Office a more comfortable place in which to entertain.

The Public Information Officer and the Commanding Officer were guests of the Kiwanis Club of Roswell at a luncheon, for which Colonel W. H. Blanchard was the guest speaker. Colonel Blanchard spoke on the future of the Air Force, and the talk was very well received.

Arrangements have now been made to have the P.I.O. called on all crash calls in accordance with AAF Regulation. In the past, the P.I.O. has been called too late to get to the scene in time to do any good.

The 3rd Photo Laboratory Unit (VII) is now commanded by 1st Lt Harold W. Arner per paragraph 3, SO #139, Headquarters, this station, dated 18 July 1947. 1st Lt. Lewis C. Bohanan, former commanding officer of the 3rd Photo Lab Unit, was transferred to the 701st AAF BU, Hamilton Field, California.

The principal difficulty reported is a critical lack of photostat paper. This has caused a large back log of important work to pile up.

The following is a breakdown of work performed during the month ending 31 July 1947;

| | | | |
|---------------------|------|------------------------|----------|
| Contact Prints..... | 3058 | Projection Prints..... | 403 |
| Photostats..... | 0 | Ground Negatives..... | 285 |
| Copy Negatives..... | 158 | Aerial Roll Film..... | 741 feet |
| | | 35 mm Film..... | 454 feet |

[REDACTED]

CHAPTER XIII

VISITORS

- 1 July 1947 - Lt Colonel R. Hamilton Martin and Lt. Colonel Loberg, Headquarters, Eighth Air Force, arrived this date to coordinate with S-3 and check inventory of printing and reproduction equipment.
- 2 July 1947 - Colonel Brown, Colonel Dubose, and others from Headquarters, Eighth Air Force, arrived on official visit and inspection. Others included Lt Colonel Raymond R. Spurgeon, to coordinate with Adjutant's Section; Lt Colonel Ray C. Milton, to coordinate with Engineering; and Lt Colonel Donald S. Dundas, to coordinate with the Legal Section (Judge Advocate).
- 2 July 1947 - Major O'Neal J. T. Archer, Headquarters, Eighth Air Force, arrived to coordinate with S-3 on flying safety.
- 2 July 1947 - Mr. M. E. Sudt, Engineering Depot, St. Louis, Missouri, visited to coordinate with Theater Officer.
- 3 July 1947 - Mr. Giles, Fire Prevention Inspector from Strategic Air Command, departed this station after completing his inspection of the Fire Departments.
- 8 July 1947 - Eighth Air Force Group Competition Inspection Team, under the supervision of Lt Colonel Burns, arrived to make the competition inspection. Major L. J. Seibert and Major Rogers L. Pearson were among those present.
- 8 July 1947 - Mr. John H. Kawka, Eighth Air Force, arrived on an ammunition inspection.
- 9 July 1947 - S-4 was inspected by Major K. D. Thompson and Captain J. W. Brady.
- 10 July 1947 - Mr. E. S. Rupp and Mr. C. D. Hall, SAGD, visited Base Supply regarding Quartermaster Stock Control.
- 11 July 1947 - Captain Billy W. Seargeant, 70th AAF BU, 103rd Weather Group, arrived on Weather Station Inspection.
- 11 July 1947 - Captain Edward G. Retartyk, Eighth Air Force, arrived to coordinate with Budget and Fiscal Officer.

- [REDACTED]
- 11 July 1947 - Mr. R. W. Truitt, Cost Analyst, Eighth Air Force, coordinated with Budget and Fiscal Officer on cost analysis.
- 11 July 1947 - Colonel Sager, Surgeon, Eighth Air Force, arrived to coordinate with Station Hospital and Base Commanding Officer.
- 14 July 1947 - Captain R. R. Showalter, Jr., and Major L. A. Boatright, Headquarters, Eighth Air Force, arrived to coordinate with Statistical Control on cost analysis.
- 16 July 1947 - Brigadier General Roger M. Ramey arrived from Ft Worth on an official visit.
- 16 July 1947 - Lt Colonel J. P. Hines, Major Louis R. Fimian, Major Howard A. Beck, and Lt Colonel John H. Bell arrived from Headquarters, Strategic Air Command, for inspection and coordination of S-4 Section.
- 17 July 1947 - Brigadier General Roger M. Ramey departed this station enroute to Tucson, Arizona.
- 21 July 1947 - Mr. W. L. Wilson, SAAMA, arrived to coordinate with the Air Installation Officer and AACS, regarding Headquarters AMC projects.
- 22 July 1947 - Dr. E. M. Townsend, PHS, Ft Stanton, New Mexico, arrived for a visit with the Commanding Officer or Executive Officer. He is Chief Surgeon, Public Health Service, Ft Stanton.
- 23 July 1947 - 19 VIP consisting of several college presidents and deans, also CAP and National Guard notables from the western states arrived from Hamilton Field to spend the night. They were enroute to Eglin Field, Florida, to witness demonstration of latest army air force equipment.
- 24 July 1947 - The above mentioned VIP departed this base after a short courtesy tour, including a sample briefing.
- 24 July 1947 - Major R. J. D. Johnson and Captain W. A. Hartzop, Jr., Army Air Forces, Washington, D. C., arrived for investigation of the B-29 crash which occurred 20 May 1947.
- 25 July 1947 - Governor Thomas J. Mabry of New Mexico, and party, were the guests of honor of Roswell Army Air Field. Brigadier General Roger M. Ramey, Commanding General, Eighth Air Force, was one of the visiting dignitaries to welcome the Governor.

[REDACTED]

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Historical Liaison Officer's Reports
2. Mission Reports, filed in Intelligence Office
3. Operations Reports, filed in S-3 Office
4. Commanding Officers Daily Diary, filed in Base Adjutants Office
5. Transcript of Staff Meetings